



THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY-ACS

Presented by the MT Census and Information Center (CEIC)
A Bureau of the Montana Department of Commerce

ACS WEBINAR TOPICS

- ① American Community Survey -What is it and How is it used?
- ① Comparability of ACS and Census 2000 Long Form.
- ① ACS Questions and How are they Used
- ① ACS – Review of Survey Error and Other Statistical Concepts.
- ① One Subject Topics: Income (Median Household and Per Capita), LMI, Poverty, Housing Characteristics



AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS) WHAT IS IT AND HOW IS IT USED

ACS - WHAT IS IT AND HOW DOES IT SERVE MONTANA?

- ⊙ The ACS is a 48 question survey conducted by the US Census Bureau.
- ⊙ Since 2006, Over **14,000** Montanans annually participate in the American Community Survey (ACS)
- ⊙ The ACS gives Montana communities the current information they need to plan investments and services.
- ⊙ Information from the survey generates data that help determine how almost **\$2 billion** in federal and state funds are distributed to Montana each year.

ACS - How Is My PRIVACY PROTECTED?

- ◎ **Individual records are not shared with anyone**, including federal agencies and law enforcement entities. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, -- not the IRS, not the FBI, not the CIA, and not with any other government agency. Only summarized data is provided (Title 13 of the U.S. code)
- ◎ **All Census Bureau employees are sworn for life to protect all information that could identify individuals.** Disclosing ANY information that could identify you or your family means 5 years in prison, or \$250,000 in fines, or both.
- ◎ To protect your privacy, **the American Community Survey NEVER asks for:**
 - your Social Security number
 - your personal information via email
 - money or donations

ACS - WHY WAS I SELECTED AND DO I HAVE TO PARTICIPATE?

① Why did I get an American Community Survey?

Your address was selected as a part of a sample and represents thousands of other households like yours. Nationally, over 3 million addresses each year are asked to participate in the survey.

① Do I have to answer these questions?

Yes. You are legally obligated to answer all the questions, as accurately as you can.

The relevant laws are [Title 18 U.S.C Section 3571](#) and [Section 3559](#), which amends [Title 13 U.S.C. Section 221](#)

WHAT ARE THE QUESTIONS?



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AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

QUESTIONS ON INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Sex
- Age
- Race/Hispanic Origin
- Education
- Marital Status
- Fertility
- Grandparent /Other Caregivers
- Veterans
- Disability Status
- Place of Birth
- Citizenship
- Year of Entry
- Language Spoken at Home
- Ancestry/Tribal Affiliation



ACS SURVEY - ECONOMIC AND HOUSING QUESTIONS

- Income
- Benefits
- Employment Status
- Occupation
- Industry
- Commuting to Work
- Place of Work
- Own or Rent Home
- Housing Characteristics
- Housing Value
- Taxes & Insurance
- Utilities
- Mortgage/Monthly Rent

ACS SURVEY QUESTIONS

Demographic and Economic Characteristic Questions & One Example (of Many) on How Information is Used

Demographic Characteristics

- ⊙ Sex
 - ⊙ Used to help prospective employers determine available labor skills.
- ⊙ Age
 - ⊙ Used
- ⊙ Race/Hispanic Origin
 - ⊙ Used

Economic Characteristics

- ⊙ Income
 - ⊙ Used
- ⊙ Benefits
 - ⊙ Used

Economic Characteristics

- ⊙ Income
 - ⊙ Used
- ⊙ Benefits
 - ⊙ Used
- ⊙ Employment Status
 - ⊙ Used
- ⊙ Occupation
 - ⊙ Used
- ⊙ Industry
 - ⊙ Used
- ⊙ Commuting to Work
 - ⊙ Used
- ⊙ Place of Work
 - ⊙ Used

ACS SURVEY QUESTIONS

Social Characteristic Questions and One Example (of Many) on How Information is Used

- ⊙ Education
 - ⊙ Used to help prospective employers determine available labor skills.
- ⊙ Marital Status
 - ⊙ Used to assess needs for housing.
- ⊙ Number of Children Born in last 12 months
 - ⊙ Used to determine health services needs for newborns.
- ⊙ Grandparent as Caregivers
 - ⊙ Used to determine day-care needs and to support legislation to assist grandparent caregivers.
- ⊙ Veterans
 - ⊙ Used for budgeting and program planning for medical services and nursing home care for veterans.
- ⊙ Disability Status
 - ⊙ Used to determine employment and job training programs especially for veterans.
- ⊙ Place of Birth
 - ⊙ Used to evaluate the effectiveness of equal employment opportunity policies.
- ⊙ Citizenship
 - ⊙ Used to allocate funds to public and private nonprofit organizations to provide employment resources aimed at making the foreign-born economically self-sufficient.
- ⊙ Year of Entry
 - ⊙ Under the Voting Rights Act, these data are required to evaluate voting practices.
- ⊙ Language Spoken at Home
 - ⊙ Used to design assistance programs to the languages and cultural diversity of the elderly under the Older Americans Act.
- ⊙ Ancestry / Tribal Affiliation
 - ⊙ Used in identifying segments of the population who may not be receiving needed medical services.

ACS SURVEY ADJUSTMENTS

- ① The Coverage Rate is adjusted for coverage error to make sure that individuals and housing units have been equally selected
- ① Margin of Error – the difference the published estimate is from the actual if you had given the question to every single Montanan

ACS SURVEY AND THE 2000 CENSUS LONG FORM CHARACTERISTICS THAT CAN BE COMPARED

Cases where differences in question wording (Q), reference periods (RP), tabulation (T), and universes (U) may impact comparisons are noted in parentheses. Specific [item-by-item guidance](#) is also available.

- Ancestry
- Citizenship Status (T)
- Nativity
- Year of Entry
- Place of Birth
- Journey to Work (T)
- Grandparents and Grandchildren
- School Enrollment
- Educational Attainment
- Language
- Poverty (RP)
- Income and Earnings (RP)
- Veteran Status
- Period of Military Service
- Employment Status (Q)
- Hours and Weeks Worked
- Industry (T)
- Occupation (T)
- Class of Worker (T)
- Rooms and Bedrooms (Q)
- Cost of Utilities
- House Heating Fuel
- Kitchen Facilities (Q)
- Monthly Rent
- Mortgage Status
- Occupants/Room (Q)
- Owner Costs (T)
- Plumbing Facilities (Q)
- Tenure
- Units in Structure
- Home Value (Q)
- Vehicles Available
- Group Quarters Population (U)

ACS SURVEY AND THE 2000 CENSUS LONG FORM CHARACTERISTICS THAT SHOULD NOT BE COMPARED

Only compare the Census **Short** Form 2000 with 2010 Census for these Characteristics

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Hispanic or Latino Origin
- Relationship
- Household/Family Type
- Subfamilies
- Vacancy

ACS SURVEY AND THE 2000 CENSUS LONG FORM CHARACTERISTICS THAT SHOULD NOT BE COMPARED BECAUSE RESULTS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT

In general, Census Bureau analysts have determined that differences between ACS and Census 2000 prohibit an appropriate comparison between the two. While it may be possible for some analyses, the Census Bureau recommends extreme caution.

- Migration
- Marital Status
- Disability Status (available in 2008-2012 ACS)
- Contract Rent and Gross Rent
- Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income
- Real Estate Taxes
- Telephone Service
- Year Moved In
- Year Structure Built

ACS SURVEY DATA NOT COLLECTED ON THE 2000 CENSUS LONG FORM

Characteristics were not available in Census 2000

Fertility

Food Stamp/SNAP Receipt

Characteristics are not yet available for the ACS 5-year data product and not available in Census 2000.

Marital History (available in 2008-2012 ACS 5-year estimates)

Field of Degree (available in 2009-2013 ACS 5-year estimates)

Disability Status (available in 2008-2012 ACS)

Service-Connected Disability Status (available in 2008-2012 ACS 5-year estimates)

Health Insurance Coverage (available in 2008-2012 ACS 5-year estimates)